

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
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R 311217Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4508
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 1817

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SU, EG
SUBJECT: FOURTH SUDAN-EGYPT JOINT HIGHER MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE
MEETING

1. LED BY PRIME MINISTERS AND BACKED BY LARGE, HIGH-POWERED DELEGATIONS, SUDAN-EGYPT JOINT HIGHER MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE HELD ITS FOURTH MEETING IN KHARTOUM MAY 25-28. BASED ON COMMUNIQUE AND NEWS REPORTS, APPEARS CHIEF BUSINESS OF MEETING WAS TO REVIEW LARGE NUMBER JOINT PROJECTS CURRENTLY BEING CONSIDERED, ACTIVELY PLANNED OR ACTUALLY IMPLEMENTED. THERE ALSO WAS FULL REVIEW REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS. THOUGH COMMUNIQUE NOTED THAT COMMITTEE TACKLED SOME DIFFICULTIES FACING JOINT TECHNICAL COMMITTEES AND RESOLVED TO SOLVE THEM, IT CONSISTS ESSENTIALLY OF LONG LIST OF STATEMENTS APPROVING POLICIES OF SUDAN AND EGYPT AND RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF NIMEIRI AND SADAT. MEETING RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY AND WHILE HERE EGYPTIAN PM SALEM ACCOMPANIED BY SOME OF HIS MINISTERS VISITED JUBA.

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2. COMMENT: DESPITE IMPORTANCE BOTH GOVERNMENTS OBVIOUSLY ATTACH TO SEMI-ANNUAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS AT PRIME MINISTER LEVEL, IT IS VERY HARD TO DETERMINE WHAT, IF ANYTHING, IS ACTUALLY ACCOMPLISHED. THERE ARE REFERENCES TO INNUMERABLE PROJECTS SOME OF WHICH MAY DISAPPEAR LIKE A RIVER IN THE DESERT WHILE OTHERS

WOULD HAVE TAKEN PLACE WHETHER COMMITTEE EXISTED OR NOT. SIMILARLY, THERE APPARENTLY IS CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION OF EVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS-SUCH AS SADAT'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER- WHICH ARE BASICALLY UNRELATED TO EGYPT-SUDAN COMMITTEE.

3. WE THEREFORE BELIEVE CHIEF PURPOSE OF MEETING IS TO SYMBOLIZE AND PUBLICIZE CLOSE BILATERAL RELATIONS AND MORE TO SHOW DEPTH AND BREADTH EGYPT-SUDAN RELATIONS. COMMUNIQUE STATES COMMITTEE WAS QUOTE KEEN ON ESCALATE PROGRAM OF POLITICAL ACTION AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION. .UNQUOTE, AND ON SUDAN SIDE AT LEAST THERE APPARENTLY ARE SOME HIGH OFFICIALS INCLUDING PROBABLY PM HIMSELF WHO PLACE GREAT STORE ON CLOSEST POSSIBLE BILATERAL RELATIONS. AT LEAST ONE MINISTER HAS INDICATED TO EMBOFF THAT HE BELIEVES UNION IS LOGICAL AND DESIRABLE OUTCOME OF CURRENT STATE EGYPTIAN-SUDAN RELATIONS.

4. THERE HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN A STRONG PRO-EGYPT AND EVEN PRO-UNIONIST ELEMENT IN SUDANESE BODY POLITIC, BUT IT HAS ALSO BEEN GENERALLY ACCEPTED THAT COUNTRY AS A WHOLE WOULD NEVER ABIDE ANY SERIOUS MOVE TOWARD UNION WITH EGYPT. PRESUMABLY NIMEIRI RECOGNIZES THIS AND HE WILL NOT ALLOW HIMSELF TO BE COMPLETELY ENVELOPED BY EGYPT'S GRAVITATIONAL FORCE. NEVERTHE- LESS, WE HAVE BEGUN TO HEAR SOME GRUMBLING AMONG THOSE WHO GOT NERVOUS WHEN THE WORD INTEGRATION IS USED FREELY IN CONTEXT SUDAN-EGYPT RELATIONS. CONFIDENTIAL

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